1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

Each member of this small community knows every other member well, his virtues, his faults, his little foibles and idiosyncrasies, and it is within these groups that one finds the choicest bits of gossip. Every native is identified with a certain hamlet as well as village. Thus, he is a man from Penguli, or Ponembatawa, as well as a member of the village of Lesu. His deepest roots are in the hamlet, and when he dies it is to the cemetery of the hamlet in which he was born that he is brought to be buried. As matrilocal residence is the rule, a man is frequently buried in a hamlet other than that in which he was living.[1]

The next smallest grouping according to locality is the household, which corresponds, in general, to the individual family, consisting of parents and children. Should a man have two wives, each wife will usually have her own house, although if there is a great difference in their ages, one being very old and decrepit, they frequently occupy the same house. The unmarried men and the boys, after the age of nine or ten, sleep in the men's house. There is no girls' house corresponding to the men's house, and the girls sleep at home until they are married. The usual occupants of each house are thus, the husband and wife, the female unmarried children, and young male children. But even though the older boys may sleep at the men's house, they participate in the life of the household. Just as each hamlet

[1] In the past, before white contact, the hamlets of Lesu formed two villages. The present six hamlets at the northern end (Simbelmalum, Ponamsambuat, Ponembwam, Ponembatawa, Ponmeniliasau, and Ponatlege) were known as the village of Tagam, and the remaining nine hamlets (Onel, Panat, Logok, Pantes, Penguli, Tarengam, Pencil, Sapone, Penbumbu) were the Lesu village. Each had their own chief, and there was constant fighting caused by thefts of women and pigs between the two villages. While war has been abolished and the two villages are now united, a certain division is still maintained between them. For instance, the boys of Tagam are still circumcised separately from the boys of Lesu. The members of the two places attend each other's rites, but there is no really close intimacy between them.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

which are related in the female line.[1] The Hawk and Eagle moieties appear to extend over all of New Ireland and the Tabar islands too, and the rule of exogamy functions wherever the moieties are found. The subdivision into clans, however, seems to vary in different linguistic units.[2] Because of the rule of matrilocal residence, members of a clan may reside in different villages, usually in near-by ones of the same linguistic unit. If, for example, a Lesu man marries a woman from Ambwa, he will usually go to live there, leaving his clan relatives at Lesu. But he will return to Lesu for all rites and events in which the latter are concerned, and he will be buried there. The female members of the clan, because of the same rule of matrilocal residence, are more likely to reside in the same village and hamlet. Also, as marriages within the same village are quite common, a man will frequently not have to change his residence upon marriage.

Although Eagle and Hawk are the names of the two moieties, there is, as far as I could learn, no theory of descent from either animal.[3] The native explanation of the origin of the moiety and clan structure as well as of the whole social organization and of the culture itself is contained in a myth about their ancestral heroine, Tsenabonpil. The narrative relates in detail how the people of Lesu went to one of the Tabar islands near by because they were afraid of a pig named Luana, who ate people. The old woman,

[1] The natives have only one word, *mutingbung*, to designate both moiety and clan. They differentiate the two by prefixing the adjective "big" for moiety, and "little" for clan.

[2] This statement is based on the literature of the area and on a limited amount of survey work which I was able to do in a few brief visits to other linguistic units.

[3] Peekel, in his study of central New Ireland, refers to these birds as gods of the marriage classes, and links them both with the sun and moon. Peekel, P. G. *Religion und Zauberei auf dem Mitteren New Mecklenburg, Collection Internationale de Monographies, Ethnologiques, Anthropos*, Tom. I, 3 Fasc., pp. 6–8. I could find no evidence for either theory.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) L983 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

gone Lagawa stood up, stopped crying, took Ladawin's hand, and together the two boys went to the beach. Lagawa remained at Penguli for over a month, taking part in its daily life and spending most of his time in Ladawin's company. He appeared very contented. His father did not return again for him and the boy went home a month or so later on his own initiative.

This incident is of interest from several points of view. First, it shows the friendship between a younger and older boy.[1] Second, it is an interesting example of the limits of a father's authority over his son and of the bonds between clan relatives.

If the orthodox rule of matrilocal residence is not observed, a boy frequently runs away from home to his matrilineal relatives. Under the same circumstances a girl sometimes runs away to the hamlet of her clan relatives. The parents can never compel the children to return. They come back when they feel like it, and this is regarded as normal behaviour for the children. After the incident when Lagawa's father tried to persuade him to come home, there was no discussion by any of the onlookers. When I began to talk about it, they took the attitude that the boy was "within his rights," and that the whole incident was a normal one in daily life.

Another happening throws some light on the parent-child pattern. Pulong is rather fond of gossip and loafing, and at sunset, which is pig feeding time, she is sometimes reluctant to leave my veranda, or some other place, where she has

[1] Similar pairing off of an older and younger boy was observed among non-clan relatives. There was the friendship of my cook, Sinbanimous, married, and at least in his late teens, and Malalis, a boy of about twelve. Malalis followed Sinbanimous about and they were constant companions. When I left Lesu, Sinbanimous left too, as he and his wife were returning to their own village some distance away. Malalis went with them for a long visit. As I left the island then, I do not know the further development of their friendship.

In the village there were several other such pairs of friends.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

intercourse. "At first," said Tomerare, "she cried, but after that she liked it, and now there is no more shame between us." Now it is said, "*Lulisi e maisi sa*," "the two are truly married." There is no feast or rite to mark the actual consummation of the marriage, for this is a private matter with which society is not concerned.

It has already been mentioned that, should the girl have just reached puberty, six or eight moons, or even more, may elapse before the marriage is consummated. It is unthinkable that a girl should have sexual relations with anyone else during this period. Her husband should be the first. But it is admitted that the "unthinkable" occurs occasionally. In that case the "other man" makes a payment of *tsera* to the wife, which she in turn gives to her husband. But this, as we shall see, is the usual pattern of behaviour for all extra-marital intercourse.[1]

During the consummation of their marriage and immediately following it they may spend the first few nights in the wife's mother's house, if the husband has no house ready. The parents leave the house and go to some other. As soon as the husband has built a new house he and his wife live in it. A new household has been added to the village, and the husband and wife take their places as part of the adult community.

SALIENT ASPECTS OF RITES

Significant aspects of the rites which mark the girl's entrance into adult society may be mentioned here. First, there is the role taken by the moieties in the exchange of food and in the playful fighting between the women. This playful fighting which occurs between the women of opposite moieties at the wedding rites, and also at pregnancy and birth rites (all concerned with some phase

[1] If the woman is a widow, or has passed puberty a year or more, there is no interval between rite and consummation.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

183 I understood this, and was rather surprised when I somewhat naïvely indicated the exceptions.

183 In order to bring out the differences between the social and individual patterns of behaviour, it is necessary to take 591 concrete instances of the former and describe the individual variations from each one. There is, for instance, the general rule of behaviour that a man upon marriage should come to live in the hamlet and village of his wife. And many men follow this pattern, but there are others—a minority—who for personal reasons do not. There are examples of men who settle in their wife's hamlet and later move away for personal reasons. Kaptan, who came originally from a bush village and settled in his wife's hamlet, Onel, grew very irritated at the way his wife's relatives constantly interfered with his affairs, and so left Onel and built a house for himself and wife at Penguli, where a very good friend of his lived.

Another man went to live in his wife's village about thirty-five miles away from his own, and then divorced her because he was tired of walking back and forth to his own village, where he went for rites, funerals, and other important occasions. After his divorce he married a woman from his own village.

183 The rule of maternal descent, that a child belongs to the clan and moiety of his mother, is rigid, and as far as I 611 know never broken. But a corollary of the same rule, namely, that property, material and immaterial, stay within the clan, is frequently not kept. Sola, who is famed as a fishing magician, learned his magic from his father; and Bullagot, the old rain magician, says that he will teach his magic before he dies to his son. As far as I could gather, it is merely personal preference in these cases that decides the line of inheritance.

183 The belief in magic is, however, quite universal. Everyone 794 appears not only to use magic on the appropriate occasions,

5: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1932 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

574 Around food also is focused much of the prestige of an individual in his
554 family. Here a man's standing is largely dependent upon his ability as a
586 food provider and the woman's upon her industry in preparing the food. Failure on the part of either partner to fulfill these obligations is sufficient cause for a divorce.

Social Organization

61 Before describing the feasts and showing the way in which much of life centers around food, it is necessary to give a very brief description of the essentials of the social organization. There are two exogamous moieties, the Eagle and the Hawk, which are subdivided into clans. Descent is matrilineal, the clan consisting of an extended family, all related through the female line. The next kinship unit in order of size is the individual family, which may be monogamous, is frequently polygamous, and occasionally polyandric.

621 On the basis of locality the largest unit is the village. In the district where I lived there are five villages forming one linguistic unit. This is not and never has been, as far as I could observe, a political unit. In the past, [721] warfare was frequent between the villages and there neither was nor is one chief for all of them, each having its own. The village is subdivided into [591] hamlets,—Lesu into fifteen. Residence is matrilocal and so a hamlet will usually have many female members of the same clan. The hamlet has from two to seven or eight houses, each one having its communal cooking ground [764] and generally a cook house also, for use on rainy days. With the exception of the very small ones, a hamlet has its own cemetery and men's house.

105 The society is agricultural. Gardening, fishing, hunting wild pigs, and cooking are the main everyday occupations. Trading is important and carried on according to exact and traditional rules. The familiar Melanesian gift-exchange is also practiced.

Frequency of Feasts

527 After living in this society for only a short time, one is impressed by the
574 great frequency of feasts. The following is a list of occasions on which they are held.

Occasion	Name
Pregnancy	ɑnɪng asɪl tsɛgɣ (eating for infant)
Birth	Grɪmɣsi (name of dance performed by women at this rite)
Giving name to infant	Basisis (name)
Several months after birth if infant is strong	ɑnɪng asɪl wɐtwɐt tsegɣ (eating for strong infant)